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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Home Canning Questions

A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, July 25, 1934.

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MR. TEUTON: This is another Household Calendar day on our Farm and Home program. And as usual Miss Ruth Van Deman is with us. Miss Van Deman, have you got another blueberry pudding recipe up your sleeve today?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, Mr. Teuton, it's too hot for sleeves today. But speaking of blueberry pudding recipes, I do want to apologize for giving that one so fast last week. I appreciated that nice friendly little call-down from Council Bluffs, Iowa, and I sent the recipe by mail right away. And if anybody else wants a typewritten copy, I'll be glad to sent it, while the blueberry season is still on.

Now, to get down to the business of the day. This is certainly a home-canning season if there ever was one. A letter from Goose Creek, Texas, says "Just a line from the Lone Star State. Let us have plenty of these home-canning programs. So many of us are interested in filling our pantries for the winter."

And here are letters from Illinois, and Kentucky, and New Jersey, and Maine, and Iowa, and all over. The one I'm going to answer first is from Ohio and asks about canning tomato juice. Our friend out there says she has trouble keeping her tomato juice "from souring and popping." She says she wants to put up a good supply because everybody in the family likes to drink tomato juice summer and winter.

That's exactly the way I feel about tomato juice. I never get tired of tomato juice for breakfast, or dinner, or supper, any day in the week, any month in the year.

Some people prefer to can their tomatoes right out of the garden, pulp and juice together, and then make up the tomato cocktail from the canned tomatoes. That's the way I like best myself. But others like to can the juice as juice. Then it's ready to serve without the bother of straining out the seeds and pulp. If you're doing it that way here are the points to watch out for:

Select firm, ripe tomatoes, deep red if you can get them, and fresh from the vines.

Next, wash the tomatoes well, and cut them into pieces. Leave the skins on, but cut out the cores and all green, or moldy, or decayed parts. The green parts make the juice bitter, and even a few bad spots may injure the flavor of your whole batch of juice or make it spoil.

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Handle the tomatoes in small lots, and work fast. Don't try to make more than one or two gallons of juice at a time. If it has to stand, it loses flavor and vitamin value.

After the tomatoes are cut up, simmer them just enough to soften them. Don't let them boil. Then immediately press the hot tomatoes through a sieve -- one fine enough to take out the seeds and skins, but still let the pulp through. Measure the juice, and for each quart add 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of salt. Or leave the salt out, if the juice is for a baby or an invalid on a salt-free diet.

Now the tomato juice is ready to can. If you are using glass jars heat the juice quickly just to boiling -- to 190° F. if you can take the temperature with a thermometer. Don't let it cook for an instant longer than you can help. Then pour the hot juice into the hot sterilized jars, fill them up right to the top, and seal at once. And that's all there is to canning tomato juice in glass jars. You don't have to process the glass jars after sealing. Simply set them aside to cool, out of drafts.

But if you are using tin cans, the method is a little different. Heat the tomato juice just to the simmering point. Stop it before it comes to the boil. Pour the hot juice into the tin cans until they are full, seal them, and immediately process for 5 minutes in a boiling water bath, counting time when the water actually boils, not before. After processing, cool the tin cans of juice at once in running water.

And here's just a word of caution about storing your tomato juice. For one thing choose a cool storage place. Also light has a bad effect on the color and flavor of tomato juice canned in glass jars. So store your tomato juice in a cool, dark place.

Another question that comes to us very often is about canning fruits without sugar. Of course anybody on a diet for diabetes must have fruit that way, and it's rather hard to buy fruit canned without sugar. But there's no trouble about putting it up that way at home. You can can fruits in their own juices just as well as in sugar sirup. Let's take peaches, for example. Pre-cook the peaches in a kettle for a few minutes with a small quantity of water. Then pack the fruit in the jars and fill them up with the hot juice. Add a little hot water if you must, but no more than you need because water dilutes the good peach flavor. Then process the jars of peaches in a boiling water bath for as long as the time table directs. The fruit juice or the hot water takes the place of the hot sugar sirup you generally use in filling up the jars. That's the only difference. Some fruits canned without sugar don't keep as much of their good flavor and pretty color and shape as when canned with sugar, but that can't be helped.

And by the way, when you are canning fruit with sugar, any kind of pure white granulated sugar is all right. There isn't a speck of difference between beet sugar and cane sugar so far as canning and jelly making go. Either one answers the purpose perfectly.

Well, Mr. Teuton's giving me the high sign. No more canning talk for today.

Goodbye, for this time.